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Marcos Says Rebels Will Fail

Philippine President to Create 'More Battalions'

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MANILA, May 29—President Ferdinand Marcos said today he shares Washington's alarm over the growth of a Communist rebellion in the Philippines, but he vowed that his forces ultimately will "wipe out the insurgents" with no help from foreign troops.

"We are also alarmed," Marcos said in an interview when asked about U.S. concerns that the insurgency by the New People's Army, the fighting arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines, is spreading. "But we do not agree with anyone that they can ever take over the country. No way. They just don't have the capability."

Marcos said that in recent days Communist guerrillas have been able to carry out a series of surprise attacks on government and military installations in different parts of the country, but he played down the raids as the work of small "liquidation squads."

To counter the insurgents, Marcos said, he has released budget reserves to create "a few more battalions," but he declined to give details. In the meantime, he said, the military would concentrate on improving discipline, training and logistical support.

Marcos' assessment of the insurgency threat appeared to differ from that of U.S. officials, who have been urging a coordinated civilian effort to back up military counterinsurgency operations and head off a possible Communist takeover. CIA Director William Casey recently conferred here with Marcos on the insurgency and other topics.

Marcos said he told Casey that what should change was the "perception of the American people," who had been fed "exaggerated stories" about the rebellion.

American intelligence sources estimate that the guerrillas have a "meaningful presence" in two-thirds of the country's 73 provinces and are able to control 20 percent of the villages. U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Armitage recently told Congress that the success or failure of the insurgency could be decided within "the next three years" and he expressed doubts that the Philippine military could contain it.

In the interview at Malacanang, the presidential palace, Marcos also said he would abide by the decision of a court currently trying his armed forces chief of staff and close confidant, Gen. Fabian Ver, and 25 others in connection with the 1983 assassination of opposition leader Benigno Aquino. He affirmed that, despite signals of objections from Washington, Ver "must be reinstated" as chief of staff if he is acquitted. But he left open the prospect that Ver would stay for only a short face-saving period and then retire.

"I intend to go along with the decision of the court," Marcos said. If Ver is convicted, he added, "that means he goes to jail or is executed, whatever is the conviction."

The assassination triggered a political and economic crisis as protesters demanded Marcos' resignation and foreign lenders suspended credit to the shaky government.

Marcos, 67, who has been in power for 20 years, also said he would run for president again in 1987 because other presidential aspirants are "weaklings" and "lightweights" who cannot be trusted to fend off communism, maintain his programs and make politically unpalatable decisions to promote economic recovery.

While his harshest remarks were reserved for political opposition leaders, whom he did not name, Marcos also disparaged presidential contenders in his own New Society Movement.

"There are some people who I think can be built up," he said, "but it will take me several years to build them up, to quit this tendency towards talking too much and this self-indulgent idea of self-

importance." He ruled out a presidential bid by his wife, Imelda Marcos, insisting that they had agreed she would never run for president.

Of his political foes, Marcos said, "I won't mention names, but I have

a dossier on each and every one of them. I know what they've been doing." He said he had evidence of corruption, foreign support and immoral behavior among his opponents. If he left office, Marcos said, the Philippines would "suffer more than it has ever suffered."

While asserting that he shared U.S. concerns about the Communist insurgency, Marcos also tended to belittle the latest guerrilla attacks.

Since the weekend, 70 persons have been reported killed in clashes in at least 10 provinces in different parts of the archipelago of 52 million people.

In addition, widespread clashes last week included the first reported shoot-out in Metro Manila between suspected guerrillas and security forces. One soldier and one civilian were killed and two other soldiers were wounded during a raid on a rebel safe house in the capital's Quezon City municipality, but the two rebels in the safe house escaped.

A western diplomat said the guerrilla raids showed that the guerrillas' "performance is slowly getting better, and they're taking on stronger units."

Marcos, however, described the attacks as desperate attempts to score gains before the Philippine economy improves following a long-delayed agreement this month between the government and foreign commercial creditors to reschedule the country's debts and extend \$3.9 billion in new loans and trade credits.